

09/621,527

REMARKS

A check in the amount of \$172 dollars is enclosed to cover the official fee, on the large entity basis, for two (2) independent claims in excess of three (3) independent claims.

In response to the Examiner's remarks concerning the Information Disclosure Statement filed October 17, 2000, as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.99(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, attached is an English Abstract, for each one of the four (4) Japanese citations, which have just come to hand. Please substantively consider this art at this time and, in the event that a petition and/or an official fee is necessary to attend to the same, please consider this to be the necessary petition and charge the official fee to the deposit account of the undersigned.

In response to the assertion that a certified copy of JP 11-209551 was not filed in accordance with 35 USC 119(b), the Applicant avers that as a certified copy of JP 11-209551 was filed in the parent US Application No. 09/507712, from which application the above identified case claims priority. In view of this, the Applicant does not believe, according to MPEP 201.14(b), it is necessary to file another certified copy of JP 11-209551 in the above identified application. However, if another certified copy of JP 11-209551 is still deemed necessary, please advise and the same will be provided to the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Claims 1, 3 and 6-7 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable Langston et al. '397, Kumagai et al. '811 and Macdonald et al. '128. The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised obviousness rejection in view of the following remarks.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 4, 5 and 8-24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim(s). In accordance with this indication, the subject matter of claim 2 is incorporated into

09/621,527

independent claim 1 and this amended independent claim is now believed to be allowable. As claims 3, 6, 7 and 10-15 all depend, either directly or indirectly, from this amended independent claim, those dependent claims are also believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 4, 8, 19 and 22 are appropriately revised to be independent claims and those amended independent claims are now believed to be allowable. As claim 5 depends from independent claim 4, as claims 16-18 all depend from independent claim 8, as claims 20 and 21 both depend from independent claim 19, and as claims 23 and 24 both depend from independent claim 22, all of those dependent claims are believed to be allowable as well.

In view of the cancellation of claim 2 and entered claim amendments, the Applicant respectfully submits that further comments concerning the applied prior art of Langston et al. '397, Kumagai et al. '811 and/or Macdonald et al. '128 are not believed necessary. The Applicant also notes the remaining prior art cited in the official action. As none of that additional art is applied by the Examiner against the claims of this application, the Applicant is not providing any comments concerning that art as well.

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection(s) or applicability of the Langston et al. '397, Kumagai et al. '811 and/or Macdonald et al. '128. references, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the

09/621,527

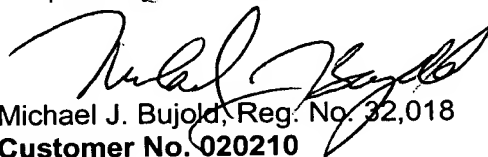
Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



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